

A B S T R A C T

In order to estimate the size of an initial population of nucleic acids in a sample of interest, in particular by PCR, the following steps are performed:

- a) providing a model of the effectiveness of the PCR, the model comprising a constant stage followed by a non-constant stage, the stages being united by a changeover region having a changeover index;
- 10 b) using the model of effectiveness to express a relationship between the changeover index and a parameter representative of the initial population size; and
- c) determining the changeover index by comparison with the experimental measurements, and deducing
15 therefrom the initial population size in the sample of interest.